

A CONTINENT TRANSFORMED

HUMAN IMPACT ON THE NATURAL
VEGETATION OF AUSTRALIA

Second Edition

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Foreword

In recent years Australian geographers have produced some excellent textbooks that build on the maturity of geographical research in this country. However, there is a continuing need for relatively short, low-cost books written for university students, books that fill the gap between chapter-length surveys and full-length books and that explore the geographical issues and problems of Australia and its region, or present Australian perspectives on global geographical processes.

Meridian: Australian Geographical Perspectives is a series initiated by the Institute of Australian Geographers to fill this need. The term 'meridian' refers to a line of longitude linking points in a half-circle between the poles. In this series it symbolises the interconnections between places in the global environment and global economy, one of the key themes of contemporary geography. The books in the series cover a variety of physical, environmental, economic, and social geography topics, and are written for use in first- and second-year courses in which the existing texts and reference books lack a significant Australian perspective. To cope with the very varied content of geography courses taught in Australian universities, the books are not designed as comprehensive texts, but as modules on specific themes, to be used in a variety of courses. They are intended for either one-semester courses or one-semester components of full-year courses.

Titles in the series cover a range of topics representing contemporary Australian teaching and research in geography: for example, economic restructuring, vegetation change, land degradation, cities, natural hazards, environmental impact assessment, urban environmental problems, communicating in geography, and cultural geography. Future topics include gender and geography, qualitative methods, and coastal management. Although the emphasis in the series is on Australia, forthcoming publications in the series will include

occasional titles on South East Asia, using the considerable expertise that Australian geographers have developed in relation to this region. Students of geography will find the series informative, lively, and relevant to their interests, and some titles, such as the present one, will also be of interest to students in related disciplines, such as environmental science, planning, and ecology.

While the primary aim of the Meridian series is to produce books for students, the topics selected deal with issues of relevance to all Australians. General readers of titles in this series will find that geographers have something distinctive to say about contemporary environmental, economic, and social issues. As the books assume little or no previous training in geography, and are written in an accessible style, they should be readily understood by the general reader.

A Continent Transformed: Human Impact on the Natural Vegetation of Australia was the first in the series. This new edition incorporates recent changes in government approaches to regional forestry management, considerations of rare and endangered species, and an assessment of the future of Australia's vegetation. Its author, Jamie Kirkpatrick, is one of Australia's most active and experienced plant geographers and conservation ecologists, and his book examines the changes in vegetation cover produced by both the Aboriginal and European inhabitants of the continent. The loss or transformation of this vegetation cover, and of the plant communities represented in it, has created major environmental problems for Australians. Jamie Kirkpatrick explores some of the ecological problems that need to be solved in conserving Australia's native vegetation, and suggests some solutions. His book presents contemporary scientific understanding of these issues, based on the disciplines of biogeography and ecology, in a readable and personal account of an important topic.

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